

Special Meeting
Budget Workshop
South Orange-Maplewood
Board of Education
March 16, 2023

A Special Public Meeting of the Board of Education of South Orange-Maplewood was held in the District Meeting Room at the Administration Building, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, New Jersey as well as utilizing the online video conference platform on March 16, 2023.

Board President Kaitlin Wittleder called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Board Member Duvall Wilson, Board Member Eckert, Board Member Gifford (6:05 p.m.) Board Member Malespina, Board Member Telesford, Board Member Vadlamani, Board Member Winkfield, Board President Wittleder

Absent: None

EIGHT VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Please take notice that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in the following manner:

- A. That written notice was sent from the Office of the Secretary of the Board at 3:00 p.m. on March 1, 2023.
- B. That said notice was sent via email to Maplewood and South Orange Township Clerks and the Editors of the News Record, Star Ledger, and the Village Green.

This Special Meeting will have a presentation by the Business Administrator on the 2023-2024 Preliminary Budget for Board feedback, discussion and adoption. The Board will be adjourning to Executive Session in a few minutes and is expected to return to Public Session around 7:30 p.m.

Motion made by Board President Wittleder, seconded by Board Member Eckert to approve the following:

SOUTH ORANGE-MAPLEWOOD BOARD OF EDUCATION RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, while the "Sen. Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act" (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.) requires all meetings of the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education to be held in public, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) sets forth nine (9) types of matters that may lawfully be discussed in "Executive Session," without the public being permitted to attend, and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that one (1) issue is permitted by N.J.S.A 10:4 - 12 (b) to be discussed without the public in attendance and shall be discussed during an Executive Session to be held on Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 6:00 PM, and

WHEREAS, the nine (9) exceptions to open the public meetings set forth in N.J.S.A 10:2-4(b) are listed below, and next to each exception is a box which will be marked when the issues to be privately discussed fall within that exception, and after each exception is a space where additional information that will disclose as much information about the discussion as possible without undermining the purpose of the exception shall be written:

"(1) Any matter which, by express provision of Federal law, State statute or rule of court shall be rendered confidential or excluded from public discussion." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is attorney/client privilege _____.

"(2) Any matter in which the release of information would impair a right to receive funds from the federal government." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is:

"(3) Any material the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy such as any records, data, reports, recommendations, or other personal material of any educational, training, social service, medical, health, custodial, child protection, rehabilitation, legal defense, welfare, housing, relocation, insurance and similar program or institution operated by a public body pertaining to any specific individual admitted to or served by such institution or program, including but not limited to information relative to the individual's personal and family circumstances, and any material pertaining to admission, discharge, treatment, progress or condition of any individual, unless the individual concerned (or, in the case of a minor or incompetent, his guardian) shall request in writing that the same be disclosed publicly." The nature of the matters, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality are: private student matter.

"(4) Any collective bargaining agreement, or the terms and conditions of which are proposed for inclusion in any collective bargaining agreement, including the negotiation of terms and conditions with employees or representatives of employees of the public body."

"(5) Any matter involving the purchase, lease or acquisition of real property with public funds, the setting of banking rates or investment of public funds where it could adversely affect the public interest if discussion of such matters were disclosed." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is:

"(6) Any tactics and techniques utilized in protecting the safety and property of the public, provided that their disclosure could impair such protection. Any investigations of violations or possible violations of the law." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is:

"(7) Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body is, or may become a party. Any matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as a lawyer." The parties to and docket numbers of each item of litigation and/or the parties to each contract discussed are and the nature of the discussion, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality are: Transportation Litigation, Pending Lawsuits and Contract Negotiations.

"(8) Any matter involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of the performance, promotion or disciplining of any specific prospective public officer or employee or current public officer or employee employed or appointed by the public body, unless all individual employees or appointees whose rights could be adversely affected request in writing that such matter or matters be discussed at a public meeting." Subject to the balancing of the public's interest and the employee's privacy rights under South Jersey Publishing Co. v. New Jersey Expressway Authority, 124 N.J. 478 (1991), the employee(s) and nature of the discussion, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality are: Employee Numbers ____.

"(9) Any deliberation of a public body occurring after a public hearing that may result in the imposition of a specific civil penalty upon the responding party or the suspension or loss of a license or permit belonging to the responding party as a result of an act of omission for which the responding party bears responsibility." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is:

WHEREAS, the length of the Executive Session is estimated to be sixty (60) minutes after which the public meeting of the Board shall (select one) reconvene and immediately adjourn or reconvene and proceed with business where formal action will be taken.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education will go into Executive Session for the above stated reasons only; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board hereby declares that its discussion of the aforementioned subject(s) will be made public at a time when the public's interest or disclosure is greater than any privacy or governmental interest being protected from disclosure.

Motions unanimously approved.

**Board Members adjourned to Executive Session at 6:05 p.m.
Board Members reconvened at 7:30 p.m.**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

BOARD PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT

The School Board meeting is a business meeting in public not a meeting with the public. Oftentimes it may appear to members of our audience that the Board of Education takes action with very little comment and in many cases a unanimous vote. Before a matter is placed on the agenda at a public meeting, the Administration has thoroughly reviewed the matter with the Superintendent of Schools/Chief School Administrator (CSA). If the Superintendent of Schools/Chief School Administrator is satisfied that the matter is ready to be presented to the Board of Education, it is then referred to the appropriate Board Committee. The Members of the Board Committee work with Administration and the Superintendent to assure that the members fully understand the matter. After the committee discusses the matter, it is presented to the full Board for discussion before any action is taken. Only then, is it placed on the agenda for action at a public meeting.

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

Thank you for coming in-person and dialing-in by phone this evening. The South Orange - Maplewood Board of Education certainly respects that you've taken the time out of your busy day to address the Board at tonight's meeting. We value public involvement in our school district, and we are eager to hear what you have to say. The board does have time limits by policy, and it will be enforcing those to enable as many people to speak as possible this evening. Each individual will be given three minutes to speak, please do your best to stay within the time afforded to you. The first public comment period is usually limited to one hour and the second public comment period may be limited to thirty minutes. All input shared with the Board of Education is taken very seriously, and will inform future deliberations and work by the Board of Education and its committees.

The following community members expressed similar concerns regarding repairs at Maplewood Middle School: Fabian Glasby, Rachel Benjamin and Myani Lawson.

Columbia High School Teacher and Asst. Affirmative Officer T.J. Whitaker spoke as cofounder of MAPSO Freedom School. Mr. Whitaker shared the history and mission of MAPSO Freedom school and provided examples of the important work they've done in the district and community.

2023-2024 PRELIMINARY BUDGET

Dr. Ronald G. Taylor, Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Eric Burnside Business Administrator presented the Tentative Budget for the 2023-2024 School Year. The presentation included the following:

- Superintendent's Update - Our budget process was extremely challenging this year. Some of those challenges include:
 - A working budget shortfall due to unexpected increases in health benefits of \$1.25 Million, Special Education of \$2.25 Million, and out-of-district transportation of \$500k.
 - With the implementation of thoughtful measures such as a halt on discretionary spending, we are confident that we can cover the \$4 to \$5 million needed for the rest of the year. It will be necessary to also utilize \$1 million from next year's unassigned fund balance.
 - These are all unforeseen increases that we unfortunately experienced in the same year. According to our auditor, they are seeing this in many other school districts, especially the districts that belong to the state health plan.
 - With some careful consideration of spending and hiring these challenges will be considerable but accomplishable.
 - While these challenges are significant, we are very pleased that we can continue our investment in the academic and social-emotional supports we have put in place to continue to combat the impact of COVID 19 on our students and staff that align with our District Goals. As a reminder, some of those investments are many continued Student Support Investments.
- Budget Development Process
 - Estimate Revenue (January)
 - Estimate Appropriations (Expenditures) (February)
 - Identify other sources of revenue (Interest on Bond Proceeds)
 - Determine if eligible for Tax Levy Adjustments (Enrollment, Benefits)
- Estimate Appropriations (Expenditures) (February)
- Balance the Budget (February / March)
 - Receive final state aid notices (March 1-2)
 - Determine if there is a surplus or deficit
 - Use goals and priorities as a guide
 - Evaluate use of banked cap & adjustments
 - Evaluate use of reserves
 - Determine Local Tax Levy
 - Balance the budget
- Projected Revenue
 - 2023-24 Operating Revenue
- Enrollment
- Expenditures

- o Salaries and Contract Services
 - Budget for contractual contract increases
 - Increase funding to contract services areas (Custodians, Paras, Security)
 - Increase funding for summer programs (ESSER Funds)
 - Remove permanent subs
- o Tuition (1.5M increase)
 - Additional funding for increases in tuition premiums for out of district placements
 - Additional funding for special education placement settlements
- o Transportation (1.665M increase)
 - Increase funding in transportation for redistricting
 - Increase funding for out of district placements
 - Added transportation for remote preschool student
 - Review and explore shared services options
 - Re-evaluation of all in-district routes to match redistricting
- o School/Department (\$240K Increase)
 - The expenditure chart shows an increase because of anticipated supply needs in federal entitlement grants.
- o Special Services, Technology, Curriculum, etc. (\$66k decrease)
 - The expenditure chart shows a slight decrease because of additional 1-time grant funds realized during the 2021-22 school year. (ESSER funding, additional funds from the maintenance reserve account).
- Expenditures vs. Revenue
- Tax Impact
 - o Estimated School Tax Impact
 - o Debt Service
- Budget Highlights
- Separate Proposal for Board of School Estimate

[presentation on file in Board Secretary's office and on the district website]

Board Member comments/questions included but were not limited to the following:

- Board Member Malespina - When did the current Board of Education learn about this because I just found out about this last month. I am asking that the FFT Committee and the Board as a whole investigate how this was allowed to occur without all Board Members knowing and also that we put in place policies and procedures and safeguards to make sure something like this doesn't happen again. Best practice dictates that as soon as we are over budget over the budgeted amount that the full board was notified and that the board approves any spending over that amount. That was not done here.

- Board Member Vadlamani - At some point the user-friendly budget will be available on the website. Will the supporting reports that go along with this cost center report also be available on the website?
- Board Member Eckert - Have we considered private health care? It is to my understanding that many school districts are pivoting. It may not save a ton but it could potentially save enough to get us out of a hole.
- Board Member DuVall Wilson - I see a lot of SEL and restorative justice or mostly SEL at the middle school and high school and I think It would be interesting to break down how the programs are being allocated at the elementary school level just to make sure, that elementary schools are receiving the same amount of services and opportunities as a middle school in high school.
- Mr. Burnside - I just want to make one comment. We identified this situation very early we are not over budget we identified it and we are taking steps so we do not go over budget.
- President Wittleder - Are there any capital improvements planned for Maplewood Middle School that fall outside of the long range facilities plan? Can you give us a snapshot of ESSER funds and how much we have allocated to date and what our plan of spending is for this upcoming year?

Motion made by Dr. Taylor seconded by Board Member Malespina to approve the following:

4427A. Approve the Preliminary Budget for the 2023-2024 school year in the amount of:

	2023-2024 Total Expenditures	Less: Anticipated Revenues	Tax Levy
General Fund	155,929,409	23,364,376	132,565,033
Special Revenue	13,970,411	13,970,411	0
Debt Service	11,428,168	4,112,417	7,315,751
Total	181,327,988	41,447,204	139,880,784

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education authorizes the Business Administrator to submit the 2023-2024 Preliminary Budget to the County Superintendent for review and approval.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education in accordance with the N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3(a), establishes a maximum travel expenditure for the 2023-2024 school year not to exceed the amount of \$200,000.

4427B. Seeks the approval of the Board of School Estimate to raise \$1,820,000 of additional general fund tax levies in excess of its adjusted spending growth limitation determined pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-5d for the following use:

- Courtesy Transportation at 1.25 miles and above for Pre-K through 5th Grade.

This request will result in a permanent increase in the tax levy and these expenditures are in addition to those required to achieve NJSLs.

4427C. Awards the contract for renovations and additions to Marshall Elementary School and Montrose Early Childhood Center to Hall Building Corp. of Farmingdale, New Jersey for the following amount:

Base Bid	\$17,582,000
Alternate AB-01	\$ 1,151,000
Alternate AB-02	\$ 36,000
Total	\$18,769,000

4427D. Approves the following provider(s) for the service indicated for the 2022-2023 school year:

Provider Name	Service	Rate
Ashley Conklin dba Ther-Abilities Pediatric Therapy Services, LLC Hamilton, NJ	Physical Therapy	\$155.00/hour \$77.50/30 min

ROLL CALL: Motion 4427A-D PASSED YES: Duvall Wilson, Eckert, Gifford, Malespina, Telesford, Vadlamani, Winkfield, Wittleder

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

Rocio Lopez, SOMEA President - Spoke about returning outsourced transportation services to the district.

Community Member Jeffrey Bennett spoke about tiered bussing.

NEW BUSINESS

Attorney Patrick Carrigg provided guidance on establishing committee structures. What was being proposed was a motion to approve the establishment of committees to hear HIB appeals and residency appeals. I had reviewed your bylaws and they require board authorization to establish a new committee and so it was my recommendation to you to take that vote so that you can create those committees which I think are necessary for a board that operates a school district this size so it can be efficient and address things in a timely manner which in many respects is required by law.

Attorney Patrick Carrigg made a motion, seconded by Board Member Malespina to approve the establishment of committees to hear HIB and residency appeals. Motion unanimously approved.
Motion made by Board President Wittleder, seconded by Board Member Malespina to adjourn to Executive Session. Motion unanimously approved.

Board Members adjourned to Executive Session at 8:40 p.m.

Board Members reconvened at 10:06 p.m.

Board Members Malespina and Winkfield absent

Six Voting Members Present

FUTURE MEETINGS

Board President Wittleder made a motion, seconded by Board Member DuVall Wilson to approve the following:

A meeting of the Board of School Estimate will be held on Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at 5:00 pm at the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education Administration Building, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, New Jersey; for the purpose of discussing Transportation. Action may be taken.

The Board of Education will meet in Public Session on Thursday, March 30, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the District Meeting Room, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ. Immediately following the opening of Public Session, the board will move to go into a Closed Session in the Superintendent's Office, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ, as well as using an online video conference platform to discuss personnel, matters within the attorney-client privilege, legal, negotiations, and other matters that may arise and require discussion, to be announced at a later date. Immediately following the Closed Session, the Board of Education will meet in Public Session (estimated to be 7:30 pm) in the District Meeting Room, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ in person, utilizing an online video conference platform which will include Hearing of Individuals. The community can view the meeting by following the steps which will be listed on the agenda. If there are members of the community who would like to attend the meeting in person, please note that masks and social distancing are optional in accordance with the guidance received from the local DOH and the CDC. Action will be taken.

Motion made by Board President Wittleder, seconded by Board Member Eckert to adjourn Motion to adjourn unanimously approved at 10:08 p.m.

Eric Burnside, Business Administrator